



A Guide to Career Development for USPHS Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Officers

**Pharmacist Professional Advisory Committee (PharmPAC)
Career Development Section
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CONTENTS

Purpose Statement	1
USPHS Commissioned Corps Mission Statement	1
USPHS Commissioned Corps Core Values.....	1
Career Development: Definition	2
The Foundation of Being a Corps Officer	2
OPDIV Performance Standards.....	2
Guidelines to Career Progression	3
Officer Responsibilities	6
Physical Examinations.....	10
Professional Credentials.....	10
Awards	11
Mentoring	11
Officer Training	11
Readiness Essentials	12
Professional Category Benchmarks	14
Education and Financial/Retirement Planning	14

List of Abbreviations

BoP	Bureau of Prisons
CCMIS	Commissioned Corps Management Information System
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CCPM	Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual
CCPMN	Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Mentoring Network
CMS	Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services
COER	Commissioned Officer's Effectiveness Report
Corps	Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service
COLTS	Commissioned Officer Leave Tracking System
CPO	Chief Professional Officer
COTA	Commissioned Officer Training Academy
CONUS	Continental United States
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DCCPR	Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness
DoD	Department of Defense
eCCIS	Electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System
eOPF	Electronic Official Personnel Folder
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
IHS	Indian Health Service
HOR	Home of Record
HOS	Home of Selection
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
ICS	Incident Command System
IRA	Individual Retirement Account
MAB	Medical Affairs Branch
MTF	Military Treatment Facility
MTN	Military Training Network
NPBCP	Non-physician Board Certification Pay
OBC	Officer Basic Course
OFRD	Office of Force Readiness and Deployment
OPDIV	Operating Divisions
OMC	Officer Mid-level Course
OS	Officer Statement
PharmPAC	Pharmacy Professional Advisory Committee
PIR	Promotion Information Report
PLEAD	Place Last Entered on to Active Duty
PMAP	Performance Management Appraisal Plan (civilian equivalent to COER)
ROS	Reviewing Official Statement
T&E	Training and Experience
SES	Senior Executive Service
TSP	Thrift Savings Plan
TIS	Time in Service
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice

Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of this document is to provide a guide to career development for officers in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (Corps). This document will help Corps officers make decisions about their career path in order to achieve their professional goals. The document will also help Corps officers organize their responsibilities in order to perform their mission(s) successfully. In general, these responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Understanding the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR's) role and the officer's responsibility in maintaining Curriculum Vitae (CV), Electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eOPF), Commissioned Officer's Effectiveness Report (COER), promotion papers, and awards.
- 2) Constantly reviewing current policies within the Corps
- 3) Maintaining professional credentials including licensing and continuing education
- 4) Continuing Corps officer training (e.g., Leadership Training)
- 5) Using the Category Benchmarks, a reference point for one's career
- 6) Meeting Basic Readiness standards

USPHS Commissioned Corps Mission Statement

“Protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation”

The Commissioned Corps is a uniformed service of public health professionals achieving this mission through:

- Rapid and effective response to public health needs,
- Leadership and excellence in public health practices, and
- The advancement of public health science.

USPHS Commissioned Corps Core Values

Leadership: Provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty.

Service: Demonstrates a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents.

Integrity: Exemplifies uncompromising ethical conduct and maintains the highest standards of responsibility and accountability.

Excellence: Exhibits superior performance and continues improvement in knowledge and expertise.

Career Development: Definition

Per the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS), career development is defined as a series of steps that will form a logical progression toward a desired career goal. The purpose of career development is to enhance the mission, performance and overall impact of the Corps by providing opportunities for professional growth for Corps officers. The eCCIS on Professional Growth and Development is available at: (http://dcp.psc.gov/eCCIS/documents/CCPM25_2_6.pdf)

The Foundation of Being a Corps Officer

Officers should continually ask themselves how they should be helping the Corps to further promote the mission(s), thus placing personal gain aside. Being a Corps officer means taking on more responsibilities in addition to those assigned with the Operating Division (OPDIV) mission. Examples of additional responsibilities include maintaining emergency preparedness and deployment basic readiness standards.

Values of a Corps Officer

The Corps promotes the health, welfare, and safety of the American people through public health practice, direct patient care, research, and regulation. In order to achieve the Corps mission and the mission specific to an assigned OPDIV, officers must embody the Corps' core values of leadership, service, integrity, and excellence. Demonstration of these values and selflessness will help officers attain recognition and value from their assigned OPDIV. Furthermore, promotions and advancement within one's career will occur more efficiently if officers always keep the Agency/OPDIV and Corps mission as their primary goal.

Emergency Preparedness and Deployment

Officers should meet basic readiness standards set by the Corps in emergency preparedness and response, which are important components within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) National Response Plan, a standardized national approach for responding to natural or man-made threats.

OPDIV Performance Standards

At a *minimum*, Corps officers are required to meet all OPDIV performance standards throughout their careers; however, the Corps and OPDIV hiring officials also expect officers to bring high-levels of initiative, creativity, and leadership toward solving problems and meeting the Agencies' missions. You are encouraged to seek out opportunities to improve patient, health, or customer service outcomes, as well as business processes, and quality of work at each assignment throughout your career.

Some Agencies or Operating Divisions (OpDivs) have performance metrics processes (e.g., Performance Management Appraisal Plan [PMAP] in HHS) that are used by supervisors to articulate expectations of the civilians they supervise and against which the civilian staff performance is measured. Some OpDivs have required that Corps officers establish similar plans with their supervisors. Each officer should check with his/her supervisor, the OPDIV Liaison Officer, or fellow officers assigned locally to determine if

such a requirement exists within the OPDIV. Corps officers should bear in mind that they are subject to the provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) if they are assigned to a billet within the Department of Defense or the U.S. Coast Guard.

Guidelines to Career Progression

Career Tracks (or “the evolution of the career”)

The purpose of this section is to aid junior and mid-level officers to understand the “natural” evolution of a career and to encourage officers to continually reassess their career goals. Within the Corps, **responsibility for career and professional development lies with the officer.** It is necessary for the officer to define his/her career goals early in his/her career. In selecting a career track an officer should make him/herself available for career counseling by the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) of the officer’s discipline, the assigned OPDIV/Program, and from DCCPR.

Career planning should be an on-going process throughout an officer’s career. Upon call-to-active duty, officers should have an idea of how their career will evolve in terms of level of responsibility, rank/grade, geographic location, and perhaps, OPDIV. For many, those goals never change and may be reached. However, with experience and a better understanding of the variety of career opportunities available to Corps officers, those ideas evolve. Moreover, officers should continually reassess their goals, survey their career paths and use the catalog of billet descriptions on the CCMIS website to refine their paths toward achieving them.

Officers should also consider involvement in OPDIV level committees, programs, and support activities that broaden their experiences within the organization.

Evolution

Officers should progress in their careers towards positions with increasing responsibility, being mindful of the billet grade (or General Schedule (GS) equivalent) relative to the officer grade (GS equivalent). Early in their careers, it is acceptable for the billet and officer grade to match. However, after serving at a specific officer grade, billet grade should, if possible, be at or above the officer’s current temporary grade to demonstrate ability to perform at the next higher grade. This billet grade is not artificially raised; instead, officers should transfer to a billet that requires greater responsibility and authority. For example, as shown in **Table 1**, changes in “career tracks” from purely clinical/clinical management to regulatory affairs and then to program management as the level of responsibility increases and as the officer’s experiences broaden is highly encouraged.

Continually Reassess Career Goals

Officers should examine billet and position descriptions throughout their career path to determine the additional training, licensure, certification and experience required to qualify (or be competitive) for each billet along that path. The officer will need to consider the impact of geographic moves, which may be required in order to follow the proposed path (isolated/hardship assignments, access to healthcare, quality of schools, other quality of life issues, *etc.*).

Officers should consider discussing their career goals with experienced officers within their assigned OPDIV. These discussions may include lessons learned, mistakes and sacrifices made, additional training that made them the “best candidate”, and experiences gained through their assignments. This interaction will help the officer determine the correct path moving forward in their careers. Officers should also begin the “networking” process with more senior leaders/officers who will continue to help officers refine their career goals and mentor them as they grow. In addition, officers should seek additional responsibilities beyond the confines of the billet description in order to increase their value to his/her OPDIV. Officers should always be mindful of the OPDIV’s mission and how your assignment helps promote that mission.

As mentioned earlier, Corps officers can access the Professional Growth and Development policy manual in the eCCIS to learn more about the different career tracks such as Clinical/Clinical Management, Program Management, and Regulatory Affairs. Additionally, a revised timeline graph (quick reference guide) located on the Pharmacy Professional Advisory Committee (PharmPAC) website has been developed to assist and give guidance to officers throughout a 30-year career within the PHS. The graph is based on Training and Experience (T&E) along with time in the service (TIS), and not rank or promotions. It is expected that officers with certain amounts of experience will perform at expected levels of responsibility.

Table 1. Potential Pharmacy Career Progression

Your Grade	Your Billet	Position Billet Grade	Career Track	Supervisory/Budget Authority	Training, Licensure, Certification, Security Clearance, years of Service/Experience
Pharmacy Clinical Career Track (Example Agencies: IHS, BoP)					
O-3	Pharmacy Resident	O-3	Clinical	Non-supervisory	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license; no required certification or years of service
O-3/4	Staff Pharmacist	O-4	Clinical	Non-supervisory, no budget responsibility or authority	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license; no required certification or years of service
O-3/4	Assistant Chief Pharmacist I	O-4	Clinical/Clinical Management	Team Leader/non-supervisory,	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license, 4 years of service as clinical pharmacist
O-4/5	Assistant Chief Pharmacist II/III	O-5	Clinical/Clinical Management	Team Leader or First-line supervisor, budget responsibility or authority	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license, 5-10 years of service as clinical pharmacist
O-5	Chief Pharmacist I/II	O-5/6	Clinical Management	Team Leader or First-line supervisor, budget responsibility or authority	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license, 5-10 years of service as clinical pharmacist
O-5/6	Pharmacy Director	O-6	Clinical Management	First-line supervisor, budget responsibility or authority	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license, 10 years of service as clinical pharmacist
O-5/6	Area/Regional Pharmacy Consultant (Supervisor)	O-6	Clinical Management	First-line supervisor, budget responsibility or authority	Pharm.D. or RPh; unrestricted license, 10 years of service as clinical pharmacist
Administrative (non-clinical) Pharmacy Career Tracks (Example Agencies: FDA, IHS, HRSA, CMS, CDC, BoP)					
O-4 to O-6	Research/Regulatory Officer	O-6	Research or Regulatory Affairs	Non-supervisory or supervisory, no budget responsibility or authority	Pharm.D. or RPh, unrestricted license, critical/non-sensitive, 5 years of pharmacy experience
O-4 to O-6	Program Management Officer	O-6	Program Management	Second-level supervisor, budget development and management, program manager	Pharm.D. or RPh Chemical-biological countermeasure training, 10 years of experience
O-6/7	Director of Pharmacy Program OR Chief Pharmacist of OPDIV	O-7	Program Management	Senior-level supervisor, budget development and management, SES position, National program Director	Pharm.D. or RPh, or other applicable graduate degree, Permanent O-6 (to be eligible for Flag), ranging from 10-16 years of progressive clinical and pharmacy program management experience

IMPORTANT: Gaining Rank throughout an officer's career is a privilege NOT an entitlement.

Table 1 lists examples of potential career progression but does not necessarily represent a normal or standard career progression.

Officer Responsibilities

Brief history: The Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) was officially established within the Office of the Surgeon General and published in the *Federal Register* Notice on May 21, 2012. DCCPR functions as one of five components of the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG). DCCPR is comprised of the Immediate Office of the Director, Recruitment Branch, Assignments & Career Management Branch and Ready Reserve Affairs Branch. DCCPR consolidates the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO), the Office of Commissioned Corps Force Management (OCCFM), the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD), the Division of Civilian Volunteer and Medical Reserve Corps (DCVMRC) and the Office of Reserve Affairs (ORA) into a single organizational unit. The functions of each of these offices are now carried out by Branches within DCCPR, with the exception of the policy (formerly led by OCCFM) and OFRD activities. The latter functions are now under the Immediate Office of the Director (of DCCPR). A diagram of the DCCPR organizational structure is provided in Appendix I.

It is the officer's responsibility to keep abreast of any changes that occur within the Corps, the policies that govern the service, and the personnel system that supports their career. Important Corps officer activities include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Reviewing the CCMIS website for policy changes, E-Bulletin, and important information
2. Signing up for all listserv communications as appropriate
3. Maintaining appropriate Corps training
4. Reviewing the Billet and requesting changes that reflect all current job responsibilities
5. Completing an annual Commissioned Officer's Effectiveness Report (COER)
6. Reviewing the Promotion Information Report (PIR) for accuracy
7. Reviewing the electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF) for accuracy and readability
8. Updating and submitting CV annually

Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF)

Information on eOPF is available on the PharmPAC website at: [USPHS PharmPAC - Career Development - Career Guidance](#)

The policy manual on OPF is available at:

http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM28_1_1.pdf

*****The officer should review and update eOPF information on a regular basis.*****

The eOPF is a complete representation of the pharmacy officer's PHS career and experiences. The eOPF should be organized, professional, and accurate.

The eOPF contents are a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences possessed by an officer in documenting career development. Most importantly, the information is used to establish an officer's rights and benefits under pertinent laws and regulations governing service in the Corps and to determine eligibility or entitlement of dependents. The information contained in the eOPF file is also important because it may

be reviewed and used by Promotion Boards and other Reviewing Officials when making decisions that affect an officer's career.

Helpful Hints:

- Maintain an annual log of Continuing Education (CE) documents
- Remove duplicate items when possible
- Review eOPF for readability and accuracy. If there are errors, contact information is provided to email the appropriate personnel.

Sections within the eOPF include:

- Application Documentation
- COER Documents
- Confidential Documents (eg. Promotion Board Score Sheet)
- Continuing Education Documentation
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- ID Card Information
- Insurance Forms
- Letters of Reprimand
- Licensing, Credentials & Certificates
- Miscellaneous Documents
- Outside Activity Documents
- Personnel Orders
- PHS and Non-PHS Awards
- PHS Support Activities
- Privacy Act/Release of Information
- Security/Sensitivity Clearance Papers
- Special Skills Documents
- Statement of Service

Promotion Information Report (PIR)

The "real time" PIR is available in the eOPF once an officer enters the secure area on the CCMIS website. The PIR contains general information such as training and experience date, retirement credit date, and current pharmacy license expiration date in addition to listing the officer's creditable service, COER history, awards, and assignment history. The pharmacy officer should review this information regularly. The PIR is also reviewed by the Promotion Boards and provides invaluable information about an officer's career progression, mobility, and performance.

Direct Access

Direct Access is an information technology system adopted to help support Corps Human Resource functions. DA has given Corps officers the ability to manage their officer data as it relates to Positions and Self-Service including contact information by maintaining home and mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. Every active duty officer can enter multiple emergency contacts, specify race/ ethnicity, post a CV, and review personal awards, education, licenses and certifications, security clearance and readiness training in one system. Officers should submit certifications, education,

licenses and residencies that go beyond those necessary to maintain commissions so hiring organizations and deployment entities can search for officers with those skill sets and knowledge (http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/Officer_Profile_Update.aspx).

Officers are able to view their present and projected readiness status and enter Basic Life Support (BLS), Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT), primary and secondary deployment roles, and supervisor information in DA. If current or projected readiness status is not compliant, DA shows the officer the specific reason for non-compliance to facilitate correction. Additionally, DA shows readiness team membership, roster information and immunization status information.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

An officer's CV is used when applying for a new position or promotion review. The officer should emphasize current professional duties and address specific criteria and/or selective factors required to perform the job when applying for a position. When preparing a CV for promotion, the officer should emphasize increasing professional responsibilities and accomplishments that have resulted in a significant impact upon goals of their OPDIV or program.

It is important for all officers to review the CV format provided by the PharmPAC <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/documents/cvtemplate.pdf>. Officers should list accomplishments as it relates to the promotion benchmarks. Corps officers should update CV annually in their eOPF; only the latest CV is maintained in his/her eOPF.

Commissioned Officer Effectiveness Report (COER)

The COER is an officer's annual report card. This document is **required** and reflects the officer's performance for their assigned OPDIV from October 1st through September 30th each calendar year. Officers are encouraged to have discussions with supervisor(s) about the elements of the COER and performance expectations throughout the calendar year.

If an officer is concerned that the supervisor does not fully understand the COER process, it is suggested that a senior officer mentor communicate with him/her for better understanding and interpretation. Officers should not hesitate to reach out to senior officers for assistance in understanding the COER process.

Helpful Hints:

- a) Record accomplishments during the year to help complete the COER
- b) Discuss expectations and performance with management regularly

Billet

The position a Commissioned Corps officer encumbers has a defined billet, which is designated in an increasing level of responsibility as O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5 and O-6 (and higher for flag-designated positions). Each position filled by an officer belongs to the OPDIV the officer is assigned. As such, the billet designation has been defined and determined by OPDIV leadership (in consultation with Commissioned Corps leadership).

Note that the OPDIV owns the position and has the final say in determining the billet level.

Position billets reflect the ideal level of skills, qualifications, and responsibilities necessary to perform the duties of a position. The billet does not reflect the skills and qualifications possessed by the officer encumbering the position. The billet level can only be increased by OPDIV leadership when the minimum skills, qualifications, and responsibilities necessary to perform the duties of the position permanently increase. The billet level does NOT increase as a result of an increase in an officer's abilities and Commissioned Corps rank.

Current billet and history of billets of previous positions are among the factors promotion boards utilize. As mentioned under "Guidelines to Career Progression", after serving at a specific officer grade, billet grade should, if possible, be at or above the officer's current temporary grade to demonstrate ability to perform at the next higher grade. It is noted here an officer must reside in a position with a billet at least one level higher than their current rank to qualify for consideration of an Exceptional Proficiency Promotion (see [CC23.4.2, Section 6.8](#)).

For more information regarding billets, please utilize the following links:

[CC23.5.4 – Billet Program](#)
[Billets & Positions Information System](#)
[Billet Forms](#)

Please note all officer billets underwent review and revision (referenced [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) in 2010, 2011 and 2012, and DCCPR is routing a revised billet policy (referenced [here](#)) as of June 2012.

Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) Website

***** Officers are strongly encouraged to visit the CCMIS website regularly.*****

The CCMIS website is available at: <http://dcp.psc.gov/>

This website is the gateway to information for the PHS Commissioned Corps Officer. Contact information, frequently asked questions, the eOPF, the Commissioned Officer Leave Tracking System (COLTS), the eCCIS, payroll information, information pamphlets, training information, important contact numbers, and other links are all available. Additionally, Issuance Updates can be found on the front page area of this website which includes policy updates, uniform information, promotion information, and other important materials.

Listserv Communication

Pharmacy officer listservs are available at: [USPHS Pharmacist PAC - PAC Subcommittees - Communications - Listserv](#)

Listservs are email-based mailing lists and serve as an important role in keeping an officer up-to-date with information. This information may include professional, category, or job-related data. Examples of pharmacy listservs include PHS Pharmacists,

Immunization Trained Pharmacists, PHS RX Jobs, and Pharmacy Student. Other non-pharmacy specific listservs, such as CCMIS, Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) and Commissioned Officer Association (COA) listservs, can provide useful information as well.

Documentation Processing

Documents sent to the **Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR)** for processing include the following:

- 1) **Documents sent directly to the eOPF by the officer** include the CV, all CE documents, thank-you letters, letters of appreciation, special skills documents, and all other PHS support activity documentation. Also, during the Promotion eligibility year, the officer must submit an Officer Statement (OS). Submission guidelines and FAQ for eOPF documents are available on the **CCMIS** website.
- 2) **Documents sent to program staff for processing** include all application documentation, award documentation, license information, and long-term training documentation.
- 3) **Documents routed through Agency/Operating Divisions (OPDIV) Liaison** include COER documentation, Billet changes, Permanent Change of Station documentation, the Reviewing Official Statement (ROS) for promotion, and all other Personnel Actions (Form PHS-1662).

Physical Examinations

An active duty officer is required to have a complete physical examination **every 5 years**. In addition, an examination/history may be necessary for long-term training and the promotion process. When an officer applies for long-term training, he/she must have a current physical on file and must also fill out and send in a “Report of Medical History”. During a year when an officer is eligible for **Permanent Promotion**, the 5-year physical must be current and the “Report of Medical History” is required to be updated within the one year time period prior to the effective date of the promotion (see Promotion checklist at: [Commissioned Corps Management Information System - Promotion Information](#)). Finally, a complete physical exam is recommended for separation or retirement. Officers are encouraged to take this physical exam in order to identify or clarify any health problems that may exist at the time of separation or retirement. An officer may waive this examination by executing the waiver on form PHS-1373, “Separation of Commissioned Officer”.

Professional Credentials

Pharmacy officers are required to maintain pharmacist licensure and it is the officer’s responsibility to make sure that DCCPR receives the necessary documents when required. In addition, it is highly encouraged officer’s obtain and maintain additional certifications that enhance performance as a pharmacy officer in job function, professional capacity, or deployment status. Officers should read the Pharmacy Category Benchmarks for additional information on certifications and credentialing. In addition,

officers can read the “Pharmacy’s Best Kept Secret” document to learn more about the non-physician board certification pay (NPBCP) at: [USPHS PharmPAC - Recruitment](#)

Awards

All information pertaining to Awards is available in the policy manual within the eCCIS (CCI 500 Series). Awards are an Agency/OPDIV responsibility that gives formal recognition to deserving Corps Officers whose accomplishments or achievements are of outstanding or unique significance to the missions of the PHS, HHS, and other programs to which Corps Officers are assigned. Officers should also be aware of Awards of military decorations. Officers are highly encouraged to seek out opportunities within his/her scope of job responsibility or within the Agency/OPDIV in order to earn these PHS awards. Currently, there are six individual honor awards for which Corps Officers may be nominated: the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM), Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), Outstanding Service Medal (OSM), Commendation Medal (CM), Achievement Medal (AM), and Citation (CIT). There is no progression or order in which an officer must receive these awards. Rather, the individual award criterion determines the appropriate level of an award, in conjunction with: 1) the scope of impact; 2) the level of achievement; 3) demonstrated leadership; and 4) the length of time involved.

Mentoring

Officers should seek professional and career development guidance from a more experienced officer who can serve as a mentor throughout his/her career. Developing an interpersonal relationship with a caring, informed, and supportive mentor will help officers understand the political and cultural environment of the Corps, receive constructive feedback, garner direction in defining and achieving career goals, and acquire an objective and credible source of information. Mentees are highly encouraged to verify information provided by their mentors within the CCMIS website. As officers progress in their careers and become senior ranking, serving as a mentor will provide senior officers the opportunity to participate in the development of more junior officers through the sharing of their expertise and knowledge. The Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Mentoring Network (CCPMN) is a one-on-one voluntary mentoring program that helps match mentees and mentors as requested. More information can be found at: http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/sc_career_mentoring.aspx

Officer Training

Leadership courses are highly recommended throughout an officer’s career. Officers should seek out opportunities to attend leadership courses either through their assigned OPDIV, through the Commissioned Officer Training Academy (COTA) Learning Management System (LMS) or in the private sector. The Training and Career Development Steering Committee and COTA Cadre are coordinating with Corps leadership to establish criteria and curriculum for the Officer Midlevel Course (OMC), Officer Advanced Course (OAC) and the Officer Executive Course (OEC), which will train Corps officers in advanced leadership and executive matters. Leadership courses help to prepare officers for the roles and responsibilities that will be necessary for a successful career within the Corps.

Readiness Essentials¹

All Corps officers are expected to meet the Basic level of force readiness within one year of commissioning, and maintain basic readiness at all times throughout their career.

Officers are highly encouraged to use the Readiness and Response Program's Basic Readiness Compliance Checklist

(http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf/Readiness/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf) to keep track of readiness compliance. For more information about readiness requirements, officers can visit the Readiness and Response website at <http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf/>.

The standards for the Basic level of force readiness are:

1. Health and Safety Standards

- a. Medical histories annually and physical examinations every 5 years: Officers must mail the required completed forms (original with signature) to the Medical Affairs Branch (MAB).
- b. Immunizations: Officers should visit the Readiness and Response website for the current listing of required immunizations and instructions on submitting documentation to the MAB.
- c. Height/weight reporting: Officers must record their height and weight every 12 months in their Profile at <https://dcp.psc.gov/ofrdweb/login.aspx>.

2. Physical Readiness Standards

Officers may choose one of two physical fitness alternatives for meeting the physical readiness standards annually. Although both of the methods below are currently acceptable, Commissioned Corps HQ and the PharmPAC highly encourage officers to complete the APFT since the President's Challenge program is not maintained by the Corps. Thus, officers may face challenges in meeting the physical readiness standards in a timely manner if the President's Challenge program's website is down for an extended period of time.

- a. Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT): The current APFT requirements can be found at <http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf/physical.htm>. Officers must enter the latest APFT results in Direct Access AND mail the original signed PHS-7044 form to the MAB. The APFT must be renewed annually.
- b. President's Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards Program: Officers must earn an annual President's Challenge award. Instructions for joining the correct President's Challenge group can be found at http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf/Readiness/PC_Instructions.pdf. It is not necessary to enter the President's Challenge award data in Direct Access or in your Readiness and Response Profile Page.

¹ Manual Circular (MC) PHS No. 377 and Personnel Policy Memorandum (PPM) 04-003 and 07-001

3. **Training and Professional Competency Standards**

a. **Corps Officer Readiness Training Modules**

In addition to the basic online modules and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) courses required for basic readiness within the first 12 months of active duty, Corps officers can complete additional online training on the PHS Learning Management System at: <http://www.respondere-learn.com/>

- b. **Basic Life Support (BLS) Training:** Officers must successfully complete and maintain currency in one of the following: 1) American Heart Association (AHA) BLS for Healthcare Providers; 2) AHA Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS); OR 3) American Red Cross (ARC) CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer. Readiness and Response currently has an agreement with the Military Training Network (MTN) granting Corps officers access to its AHA BLS for Healthcare Providers courses at MTN locations throughout the U.S. at no charge. Officers should contact the education and training department of a military treatment facility (MTF) to inquire about the availability of BLS for Healthcare Provider courses. A listing of MTFs that are MTN BLS sites can be found at <http://www.usuhs.mil/mtn/>

Officers must record the latest BLS expiration date in Direct Access AND fax the BLS card to the eOPF. BLS training must be renewed every two years.

- c. **Licensure:** Corps officers must possess and maintain a current unrestricted professional pharmacy license in at least one U.S. state and maintain current documentation in his/her eOPF.
- d. **Deployment Role:** All officers must identify a deployment role in Direct Access under the Self Service section, and it does not need to be a clinical role such as “Pharmacist”. However, as policy states (*Manual Circular PHS No. 377*), officers deploying in clinical positions who are not assigned to a clinical billet in their regular duty assignment must acquire a minimum of 80 clinical hours in his/her specialty on an annual basis. All officers who wish to deploy in a clinical role such as “Pharmacist” must record their hours working directly with patients in their Readiness and Response profile at: <https://dcp.psc.gov/ofrdweb/login.aspx> (this is in addition to selecting a clinical deployment role in Direct Access).
- e. **Uniforms:** Officers must possess and maintain all required uniforms. The required uniforms will be specific to the deployment/mission and/or deployment role.

Professional Category Benchmarks

The Professional Category Benchmarks introduce a standardized process to better guide the officers through the promotion process throughout their career. The standardized process is based on Promotion Precepts as follows:

1. Performance Rating and Reviewing Official's Statement (Performance)	40%
2. Education, Training, and Professional Development	20%
3. Career Progression and Potential	25%
4. Professional Contributions and Services to the PHS Commissioned Corps (Officership)	15%
5. Basic Readiness	0%

By definition, these Precepts describe the “best qualified” officers for promotion. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health directs the Precepts with input from each Chief Professional Officer and their respective category through the PharmPAC. Precepts are broken down into Benchmarks. **Benchmarks are not requirements**, but merely a guide that assists officers to make important career choices. The Benchmarks inform officers and promotion boards about the levels of achievement generally considered to describe the “best qualified” officer for a specific category at a specific grade. This document can also benefit the officer in setting some personal long-term goals for his or her career advancement.

As an officer navigates their career, Category Benchmarks should be utilized as a guide in preparation for career development from junior officer to senior officer. The individual factors within each Precept are not listed in priority order. The importance of each factor is left to the discretion of the Promotion Boards. The members of the Promotion Boards review the service records of each officer under consideration for promotion and each assigns a score for the specific Promotion Precept. Promotion Board members exercise their professional judgment and discretion in the review and rating of each record.

Category Benchmarks can be found on the CCMIS website under Promotion information at: <http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/promotions/PY2013.aspx>.

Education and Financial/Retirement Planning

Education - The Post 9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service after September 10, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay eligible individuals:

- Your full tuition & fees directly to the school for all public school in-state students. For those attending private or foreign schools tuition & fees are capped at \$17,500 per academic year.

- For those attending a more expensive private school or a public school as a non-resident out-of-state student, a program exists which may help to reimburse the difference.
- A monthly housing allowance (MHA) based on the Basic Allowance for Housing for an E-5 with dependents at the location of the school. For those enrolled solely in distance learning the housing allowance payable is equal to ½ the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents (\$684.00 for the 2012 academic year). For those attending foreign schools (schools without a main campus in the U.S.) the MHA rate is fixed at \$1,368.00 for the 2012 academic year. The academic year begins on August 1. (*Active duty students & their spouses cannot receive the MHA*).
- An annual books & supplies stipend of \$1,000 paid proportionately based on enrollment.

This benefit provides up to 36 months of education benefits, generally benefits are payable for 15 years following your release from active duty. The Post-9/11 GI Bill also offers some service members the opportunity to transfer their GI Bill to dependents.

For additional information, please refer to the GI Bill website at:

http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/index.html

Financial Planning

All officers are encouraged to begin financial planning early in their careers. The non-contributory retirement system offered through the Corps will not be sufficient enough to sustain the same standard of living an officer may enjoy while on extended active duty.

Retirement Planning

Planning for retirement from the Corps is necessary to gain an understanding of what benefits, pay, and allowances will be available for the officer and his/her dependents. Officers should start retirement planning no later than the 15-year point of their career. Important areas of focus when planning retirement from the Corps include the following:

1) Application Process

If the officer has more than 20 years but less than 30 years of active duty service, he/she must request voluntary retirement and obtain approval to retire. (Requesting retirement based on a 30 year career or separating (retiring) due to medical reasons requires separate approval). Once officers receive approval to voluntarily retire, he/she must apply for retirement by completing form PHS-1373 "Separation of Commissioned Officer" and forwarding to the Assignments Team within Commissioned Corps HQ.

Important: Officers should consider the following **before their effective date of retirement:**

- a) A Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)
- b) A Direct Deposit Form for retirement pay
- c) An Employees Withholding Allowance Certificate

- d) A Request for Voluntary State Income Tax Withholding from Retired Pay
- e) A Request to Establish/Change Mailing Address form;
- f) Choosing a Home of Selection
- g) The Officer's Leave Record
- h) An Exit Physical Examination
- i) Terminal Leave and Lump-Sum Leave Payments
- j) Decisions about your Thrift Savings Account (TSP)
- k) Retirement of the Active Duty ID Card

2) **Travel and Transportation Allowances**

Upon retirement, officers are entitled to travel and transportation allowances from the last permanent duty station, from a designated place in the Continental United States (CONUS), from storage, or any combination thereof, to the member's home of selection (HOS). The HOS may be chosen anywhere within CONUS and does not have to be the officers Home of Record (HOR) or place last entered onto active duty (PLEAD). Currently, the allowances include travel and transportation (mileage and per diem) for the officer and his/her dependents for each authorized travel day, shipment of his/her household goods up to the authorized weight limit, and non-temporary storage for one year at the point of origin of those household goods. Contact your OPDIV travel representative or the travel and transportation coordinator at DCCPR for current information on travel regulations.

3) **Benefits:** Some benefits that are available to retired officers include the following:

- a) Use of the Uniformed Services Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs)
- b) Enrollment in TRICARE
- c) Medicare at age 65
- d) Use of military facilities (commissaries, exchanges etc.)
- e) Space-A Travel

4) **The Survivor Benefit Plan** allows an officer to provide an annuity to the spouse, children, or in some cases a third party, upon the officers death. Enrollment is automatic unless the officer and spouse voluntarily withdraw from the program.

5) **Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits:** An officer and dependents may be eligible for a variety of benefits from the VA that include:

- a) VA Hospitals
- b) Life Insurance
- c) Disability Compensation
- d) Educational Assistance
- e) Home Loan Guarantee
- f) Death Benefits
- g) Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

6) **Employment:** Employment after retirement is authorized. However, some restrictions may occur if there is a conflict of interest. All retired officers should contact their Agency/OpDivs ethics counselor for clarification.

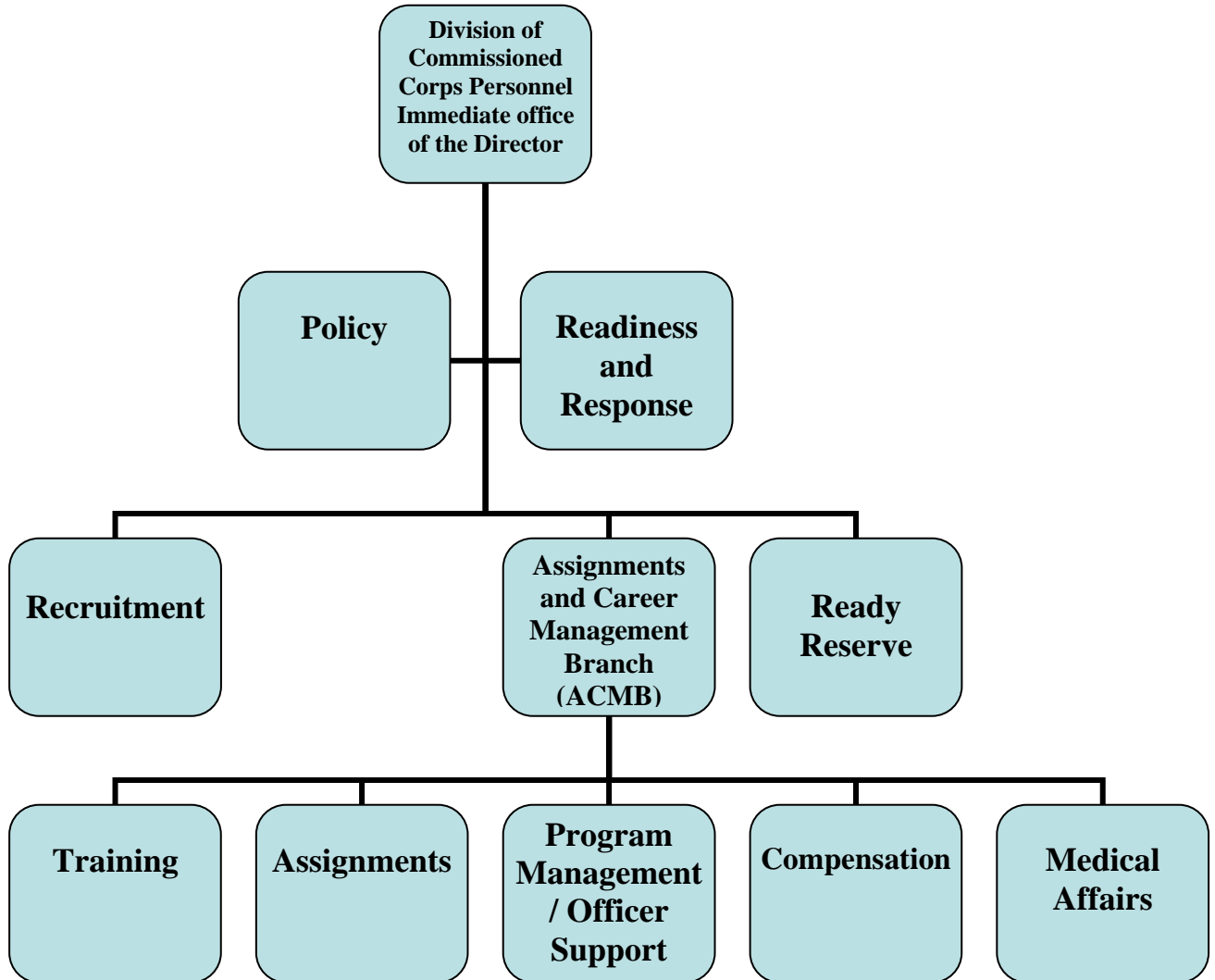
7) **Assistance:** All retired officers should designate someone that will act as their personal representative in the event that he/she becomes incapable of acting on his/her own. A memorandum should be submitted to the retirement coordinator and placed in the OPF as soon as possible.

8) **Social Security:** Corps officers who entered onto active duty after January 1, 1957 are eligible for Social Security benefits. The Social Security Administration determines the eligibility and amount of benefits.

9) **Former Spouses' Protections Act:** the Former Spouses' Protection Act (FSPA) affects retired Corps officers. Disposable retirement pay may be divided by a court and paid to the former spouse by the Corps.

10) **Survivor Benefits and Assistance:** Death and survivor benefits are available to a retired officer and his/her dependents depending on the status at the time of death. Complete and detailed "Information on Commissioned Officers Survivor Benefits" also known as "the death benefit" can be found in the Commissioned Corps Policy Manual (CCPM) Pamphlet No. 63 on the CCMIS Website.

APPENDIX 1: Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness



Edition	Date	Revision History
1.0	2005	Original Document
2.0	2013	All sections rewritten to reflect new organizational structure, leverage IT enhancements, align with recent policy changes, and improve readability.